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LETTERS OF WILLIAM PROCTOR.

LIBRARIAN AT WESTOVER.

(I.)

[William Proctor, a Scotchman, was tutor and librarian at Westover, in the time of Colonel William Byrd 2d. He was a Presbyterian when he arrived in Virginia, but became later a minister of the established church and had a parish in Amelia county. The letters here printed, and some others, were recorded in that county, probably having been sent by his relations in Scotland, when claiming his estate after his death.]

At Westover, Upon James River, Virginia,
Oct. 25th, 1740.

Dear Brother :

Yours, dated some time last Winter, I Received in July, with a great deal of Pleasure, w'ch your affection bids me expect yearly. I am not a little glad that my Father is so well & that he has now a grandson of his own surname to Keep up the Family ; But to counterbalance this, as it commonly goes with Human Affairs, I can't help sympathizing at the same time with mine affectionate & dear Sister Helena, whom you represent as frequently ailing of her wonted Distemper. In sorrow she conceives, Poor woman, like her Mother Eve, May There be better things next season. What a pity it is that such a Man as John Geddes, of superb capacity & good sense, shou'd be digging in Anhuit whilst his Humble servant, not daring to compare with him & proud of his conversation Enjoys, for the time the conveniences of Life at Ease, Tho' for this very reason I could wish very soon to settle in a new way for Life; yet I am afraid it may be two or three years hence—let me, therefore, presume mean time ever to advise for your Children at least, that how soon they are able you would put them out early to learn Trades, & it may, perhaps, be in my power to direct them how where to * * * good bread; let them, If you can, read, cast up accounts, but beware of more least it spoil good Tradesmen. All things considered, D'r Sir, I'm well aware how unpromising & unweilding a thing it would be for you to fall in with what I proposed with respect to Virginia in my last, but were you to prevail with a good number to enter with the same design there cou'd no man be fitter to direct & superintend a little Colony, & the whole adventure wou'd be the easier & cheaper. Here a Man improves his own Land & transmitts it to his Children ; & a poor Man, if diligent, may in a short time (less than seven years) become able to purchase & set up upon, perhaps a mile square of Ground. When I leave this Family, unwilling to part with me, as I'm

indeed with them, I may perhaps go directly for London, but am not yet determined whether in the same trip shall [go to] Scotland or not, unless I cou'd find Hopes of being accompanied back again by some of my honest and Industrious Countrymen to share with me in a project of Husbandry, which I cou'd carry on the more to their & mine own advantage, shou'd I have the Happiness of attaining to another Business near them. As to the Stain you write of, I'm sorry he's lost & he shou'd by a Right be lost to me, & then to John Geddes in Kinermony from whom * * * one Else.

Through the Stain, as it is well * * to most of his Neighbours * particularly * * Stewart Kirk, officer, & John Garrow, his Brother in Law, tho' I don't believe John Geddes will ever deny it, he is too honest for that. By one Mr. Trick, son to Robert Morriss' former wife, I learned a great deal of your News for last year. I heard of Mr. Cruickshank, as well as of his faith ful Scholars, Messrs. Thomson & Margock, who shou'd Learne Bookkeeping & come to Virginia, &c., &c. I wou'd fain know whether my Letter to Mr. Lesly at Torbea, & Craighough at Newton-Dunbar, arrived. I intrust you with my best Respects to all acquaintances who may ask for me. Offer my Duty to all Relations, beg your yearly & timely advice, particularly concerning a change of Life, w'ch I must think of shortly, & am with the greatest Respect & Sincerity,

D'r S'r, your affectionate Brother,

WM. PROCTOR.

P. S. I salute Mr. David Garrow & Mr. Alex. Morr, my dear comrades, & beg they'd write me next shipping for Glasgow. To Mr. John Geddes, in Rothies, near Elgin of Murray. By way of Glasgow, Capt. Gray, Q. D. C.

(II.)

Westover Upon James River, in Virginia,
July, 1739.

Dear Brother :

Of four letters already wrote you, I understand by your only one to me of January, 1738, that the two first arrived, uncertain about the date of the other two, & leargen [?] till your * * * Returns come up which failing * by the Glasgow Ship to set sail from thence next September. After this, therefore, you may only promise your self that I'll answer all the Epistles you shall vouchsafe me till I can find a good way of bearing myself the expence of postage twixt Glasgow & Elgin I'd fain do, cou'd I find whom to trust for that Purpose. The Satisfaction of hearing yearly from Relations & Friends I would purchase by my labour at any expence ; and pray God they be now no worse than yours mentioned representeth them. I am highly obliged to whomsoever contributes the Least to my Dear Father's comfort & instruction, to whosoever rightly advises my Brother & Sister in Law, especially in

regard to their & my common Parent, to whomsoever cares for my loving Sister & her Offspring, did I not reckon these last are in good Hands, & finally to whatsoever Friend, comrade or acquaintance has ever done me good or remembers poor Will, who endeavors not to be behind the best of 'em, at least in Gratitude and Remembrance, &c. Upon the Supposition that even those who disliked my adventure & absence, may perhaps suffer to hear, at least, whether I have not repented ; 'Tis with the greatest Deference I presume to affirm that had I known beforehand my present condition I wou'd have taken the Trip, at the same time I love my Friends & Country like a true Scotchman, & had rather serve them, did they need or desire it, rather than India or Italy itself, or even Virginia.

I serve a very Honourable & Virtuous Master, But whether to my Philosophy or to have me take that as a favour which I reckoned more than equal, or for what ever Reason, matters run as if I shou'd have paid my Passage at least, till after a Fruitless conference with his Honour on that subject I wrote out and presented him with an Humble & forcible address, wherein upon a Reading his Honor own'd I had proven beyond answer the Equity, at least, of his paying the money ; the chief arguments were : 1 mo. That I had been sent for and came not to beg employment ; 2 o. That Mr. Henry having promised Mr. Buchanan to pay this passage (Mr. Buchanan resting contented herewith, notwithstanding I refused him to be any ways obliged for the passage), Mr. Henry alone, whether he acted by Commission or not, must have paid accordingly without any possible Recourse upon me, who was never in his council nor ever desired any Favour of him. 3 mo. Mr. Buchanan having recovered this Passage to Mr. Henry's Account, the money wich Col. Byrd paid the Captain of the Ship immediately upon my arrival, & which he sent him by me, was returned unto my Hands, so that I was at no loss, tho' his Honor made it a part of My Salary; hence I cou'd not be brought into Mr. Henry's obligation, who was still supposed to have acted for Col. Byrd, not for me, &c. His Honour was pleased to tell me I deserved the 5 lbs. had it been but for my Spirit & Reasoning, but I thought within myself 'tis good to be sure, even with the best, & to venture upon nothing but a Certainty. I have, however, this to say, that for the time I live as happily, if it is not my own fault, as my worthy Master; he is very communicative in Conversation & lets me enjoy that of Wrangles [?] as much as may well be. I am library keeper & have all genteel conveniences ; moreover, to save me a risk, he gives me yearly a draught upon his London Factor, & orders my cloathes with his own goods at the English Price ; which is cheaper than in Scotland. This renders my 20 lbs. English money as good as at Home, and I have some small addition of one guinea or two p. annum for my Pupill's Companion, besides the kindness of the Family in having my Linen made or mended, &c. And then for my future advantage I can only

see that Col: Byrd will certainly procure me a Parish worth 100*£* ster'l a year, If I can like it, or help me to Commence a Husbandman upon Land of my own, w^{ch} last, if Rightly understood and managed, is the best employment in the Collony. My good Master, indeed, frequently is pleasant with me, & says why mayn't I be at once Parson & Planter, the one assisting the other ; but I never yet believed I cou'd follow two things or leave my Book for any thing unless only to aid & countenance a skillful manager cou'd I find him.

Upon my first observations in this Country Husbandry obtruded itself into my thoughts and set them a projecting how I might cultivate the same ; other things failing or not satisfying, nay in any case I could, tho' at last think of no better way for one in my situation, &c., than that uncertain one of inviting over a half a dozen, or even dozen (less or more) of my Laborers & skillful Country People to a partnership with me in the Produce of a Piece of Land I wou'd obtain by Patent, in such manner as that I shou'd contribute my small Money, Interest & directions, &c., & they their moderate Labour as they pleased, with whatever other assistance in their power; upon this foundation of a scheme & contract might be joined that would be the making of all concern'd, in proportion to their respective skill & Labour, & first stock about settling.

If a Company thro' poor luck have not so much money all together as can purchase a piece of good Land & afford Tools for manuring it after their cloathes & passage, there is all Human probability of their Success, if diligent for but a few years.

GENEALOGY.

THE BROOKE FAMILY OF VIRGINIA.

By PROF. ST. GEORGE TUCKER BROOKE, Morgantown, W. Va.

(CONTINUED)

In obedience to an order of Essex Co. Court, dated in June, 1768, directing us to settle Mr. John Rose's part of the Executorship of William Brooke, dec'd. It appears that the said Rose proved the last will of the said William Brooke and took upon himself the burden of the Executorship in May, 1765 ; that some time in May, 1767, the said widow likewise proved the said will, and on the fourth day of December last intermarried with Mr. Richard Hipkins. We have, therefore, examined the books, vouchers and papers relating to the said estate from the time of the Testator's death to the 10th of December, 1767, in which books and particular transactions of each Executor are specified, which will